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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2013

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/68/438/Add.9)*]

68/217. Sustainable mountain development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 55/189 of 20 December 2000, 57/245 of 20 December 2002, 58/216 of 23 December 2003, 59/238 of 22 December 2004, 60/198 of 22 December 2005, 62/196 of 19 December 2007, 64/205 of 21 December 2009 and 66/205 of 22 December 2011,

Reaffirming chapter 13 of Agenda 21[1] and all relevant paragraphs of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation),[2] in particular paragraph 42 thereof, as the overall policy frameworks for sustainable development in mountain regions,

Reaffirming also the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want",[3]

Recognizing that the benefits derived from mountain regions are essential for sustainable development and that mountain ecosystems play a crucial role in providing water resources to a large portion of the world's population,

Recognizing also that fragile mountain ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, deforestation and forest degradation, land use change, land degradation and natural disasters, and that mountain glaciers around the world are retreating and getting thinner, with increasing impacts on the environment and human well-being,

Acknowledging that, despite the progress that has been made in promoting sustainable development of mountain regions and conservation of mountain

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[3] Resolution 66/288, annex.

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ecosystems, including their biodiversity, poverty, food insecurity, social exclusion and environmental degradation are still high, and access to safe and affordable drinking water and basic sanitation as well as to sustainable modern energy services continues to be limited,

Noting the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions ("Mountain Partnership"), launched during the World Summit on Sustainable Development, with benefits from the committed support of 52 countries, one intergovernmental organization and 15 organizations from major groups, as an important multi-stakeholder approach to addressing the various interrelated dimensions of sustainable development in mountain regions,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[4]

2. *Encourages* States to adopt a long-term vision and holistic approaches, including through incorporating mountain-specific policies into national sustainable development strategies, which could include, inter alia, poverty reduction plans and programmes for mountain areas, as appropriate;

3. *Encourages* greater efforts by States, all stakeholders and the international community towards the conservation of mountain ecosystems and the enhancement of the well-being of their local populations, taking into account the extent of the current challenges they face and bearing in mind the increased economic, social and environmental costs that inaction might represent for countries and societies;

4. *Expresses its deep concern* at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact in recent years, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for societies throughout the world, recognizing the special vulnerability of people living in usually remote mountain environments, especially those in developing countries, and encourages the international community to take further steps to support national and regional efforts to ensure the sustainable development of mountains;

5. *Stresses* the special vulnerability of people living in usually remote mountain environments, often with limited access to health, education and economic systems and particularly at risk because of the negative impact of extreme natural phenomena, and invites States to strengthen cooperative action, with the effective involvement and sharing of experience of all relevant stakeholders, by strengthening existing arrangements, agreements and centres of excellence for sustainable mountain development, as well as exploring new arrangements and agreements, as appropriate;

6. *Encourages* States to develop and improve disaster risk management and resilience strategies in mountain regions, including a forward-looking perspective, to cope with such extreme events as rockfalls, avalanches, glacial lake outburst floods and landslides, which can be exacerbated by climate change and deforestation;

7. *Recognizes* that mountains provide sensitive indications of climate change through phenomena such as modifications of biological diversity, the retreat of mountain glaciers and changes in seasonal runoff that are having an impact on major sources of freshwater in the world, and stresses the need to undertake actions

[4] A/68/307.

to minimize the negative effects of these phenomena and promote adaptation measures;

8. *Underlines* the fact that action at the national level is a key factor in achieving progress in sustainable mountain development, welcomes its steady increase in recent years with a multitude of events, activities and initiatives, and invites the international community to support the efforts of developing countries to develop and implement strategies and programmes, including, where required, enabling policies and laws for the sustainable development of mountains, within the framework of national sustainable development plans;

9. *Encourages* the increased involvement of local authorities, as well as other relevant stakeholders, in particular the rural population, indigenous peoples, civil society and the private sector, in the development and implementation of programmes, land-use planning and land tenure arrangements, and in activities related to sustainable development in mountains;

10. *Underlines* the need for improved access to resources, including land, for women in mountain regions, as well as the need to strengthen the role of women in mountain regions in decision-making processes that affect their communities, cultures and environments, and encourages Governments and intergovernmental organizations to integrate the gender dimension, including gender-disaggregated data, in mountain development activities, programmes and projects;

11. *Encourages* the further undertaking of multi-stakeholder and transboundary initiatives at the national and regional levels, where appropriate, such as those supported by all relevant international and regional organizations, to enhance sustainable development in mountain regions;

12. *Stresses* that indigenous peoples' traditions and knowledge, including in the field of medicine, are to be fully considered, respected and promoted in development policy, strategies and programmes in mountain regions, and underlines the need to promote the full participation and involvement of mountain communities in decisions that affect them and to integrate indigenous knowledge, heritage and values in all development initiatives;

13. *Notes* decision X/30 of 29 October 2010, entitled "Mountain biological diversity", adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its tenth meeting,[5] in which the parties noted with appreciation the progress made by the Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment and invited parties, other Governments and stakeholders to take specific actions for the conservation, sustainable use and benefit-sharing of mountain biological diversity;

14. *Welcomes* the growing contribution of sustainable tourism initiatives in mountain regions as a way to enhance environmental protection and socioeconomic benefits to local communities, and the fact that consumer demand is increasingly moving towards responsible and sustainable tourism;

15. *Notes* that public awareness needs to be raised with respect to the positive and unaccounted economic benefits that mountains provide not only to highland communities but also to a large portion of the world's population living in lowland areas, and underlines the importance of enhancing the sustainability of ecosystems that provide essential resources and services for human well-being and

[5] UNEP/CBD/COP/10/27, annex.

economic activity and of developing innovative means of financing for their protection;

16. *Encourages* Member States to increase efforts to address poverty, food security and nutrition, social exclusion and environmental degradation in mountain areas, so as to improve the livelihood of the local communities and the sustainable use of mountain resources;

17. *Also encourages* Member States to collect at the local, national and regional level, as appropriate, disaggregated scientific data on mountain areas through systematic monitoring, including of trends of progress and change, based on relevant criteria, to support interdisciplinary research programmes and projects and to enhance an integrated and inclusive approach to decision-making and planning;

18. *Encourages* all relevant entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, to further enhance their constructive efforts to strengthen inter-agency collaboration to achieve more effective implementation of the relevant chapters of Agenda 21,[1] including chapter 13, and paragraph 42 and other relevant paragraphs of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,[2] and the relevant paragraphs of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want",[3] taking into account the need for the further involvement of the United Nations system, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations University, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, as well as international financial institutions and other relevant international organizations;

19. *Recognizes* that mountain ranges are usually shared among several countries, and in this context encourages transboundary cooperation approaches where the States concerned agree to the sustainable development of mountain ranges and information-sharing in this regard;

20. *Notes with appreciation*, in this context, the Convention on the Protection of the Alps (Alpine Convention), as well as the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, which promote constructive new approaches to the integrated, sustainable development of the Alps and the Carpathians and provide a forum for dialogue among stakeholders;

21. *Encourages* States and all stakeholders to give appropriate consideration to the issues of sustainable mountain development in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda;

22. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session on the implementation of the present resolution under the sub item entitled "Sustainable mountain development" of the item entitled "Sustainable development".

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20 December 2013